

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 18220

EXDIS

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TAGS: PFOR, MX, FR, SP
SUBJECT: FOREIGN SECRETARY ROEL'S VIEWS ON FRANCE AND
SPAIN

1. WHEN I SAW FOREIGN SECRETARY ROEL OCTOBER 26, HE PROVIDED HIS IMPRESSIONS OF HIS OWN TRIP TO FRANCE AND TO SPAIN, AS PART OF PRESIDENT LOPEZ PORTILLO'S OFFICIAL PARTY. HE WAS EUPHORIC ABOUT HIS VISIT TO PARIS, SAYING HE WAS CONFIDENT THERE WERE GREATER MEXICAN TRADE OPPORTUNITIES POSSIBLE WITH FRANCE THAN WITH SPAIN. ROEL SAID HE HAD BEEN TREATED EXCELLENTLY, HAD MADE CONTACTS WITH MANY HIGH-LEVEL FRENCH OFFICIALS, AND HAD HAD OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT COUNTRYSIDE. HE SAID HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT LEFT WOULD NOT TRIUMPH IN FORTHCOMING LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS.

2. IN CONTRAST TO FRENCH TRIP, WHERE HE WAS ON HIS OWN, ROEL PLAYED SECONDARY ROLE IN VISIT TO SPAIN TO LOPEZ PORTILLO AND MRS. JLP. HE COMMENTED THAT SPANISH TRIP'S PRINCIPAL CHARACTERISTIC WAS ITS IMMENSE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SENTIMENTAL IMPLICATIONS--THAT IS, THE END OF THE FORTY-YEAR MEXICAN-SPANISH BREAK IN OFFICIAL CONTACTS, CONFIDENTIAL

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JLP'S PRESENCE WITH KING JUAN CARLOS IN THE CANARIES FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE DIA DE LA RAZA, AND THE PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO CAPAROSSO, THE TOWN FROM WHICH HIS FORBEARS CAME. HE THOUGHT THAT THERE WERE NOT MANY REAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR INCREASED MEXICAN-SPANISH TRADE THAT WERE LIKELY TO MATERIALIZE IN THE NEAR FUTURE, GIVEN THE CONDITION OF THE SPANISH ECONOMY.

3. ROEL EXPRESSED TO ME HIS APPREHENSION, BASED ON HIS OBSERVATIONS DURING SPANISH TRIP, OVER JUAN CARLOS' ABILITY TO SURVIVE FOR LONG AS CHIEF OF STATE. WITHOUT GIVING SPECIFIC DETAILS, HE REFERRED TO RUMORS OF KING'S TENDENCY TO CREATE OR PROMOTE INCIDENTS THAT GAVE SPANISH SECURITY FORCES OPPORTUNITIES TO CRACK DOWN ON EXTREMISTS, AND THOUGHT THAT IF POLITICAL CRISES CONTINUED TO SURFACE, MILITARY WOULD CONSIDER THAT THEY WERE UNDER PRESSURE TO TAKE CONTROL AND UNSEAT THE KING. I MADE POINT THAT, IF PORTUGAL COULD SURVIVE THE TRANSITION FROM SALAZAR AND EMERGE WITH A DEMOCRATIC REGIME, IT SEEMED THAT SPAIN ALSO OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO MAKE A SIMILAR ADJUSTMENT WITHOUT RETURNING TO AUTHORITARIANISM THAT CHARACTERIZED FRANCO'S RULE; BUT ROEL COMMENTED THAT IN HIS VIEW THERE WERE MAJOR DIFFERENCES IN POLITICAL BACKGROUND AND INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOLOGY BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, AND THAT HE WAS NOT OPTIMISTIC ABOUT SPANISH POLITICAL FUTURE. LUCEY

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